



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Office of the Secretary General
Gender Section

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- ✚ I am honoured and pleased to speak today and would like to express my gratitude to ODIHR for inviting me.
- ✚ I would like to speak briefly today on behalf of the Gender Section about the OSCE progress on the implementation of the 2004 Gender Action Plan and how it can be improved.
- ✚ The Gender Action Plan stipulates that participating States, the Secretariat, Institutions and Field Operations shall ensure that the working environment and all OSCE structures are being gender mainstreamed and that a gender perspective is integrated into OSCE activities, programmes and projects. It further recognizes that gender mainstreaming requires consistent attention to the implications of the organization's activities for men and for women, in the context of the three dimensions: the politico-military, economic and environmental and human dimensions.
- ✚ Besides, the Gender Action Plan says that – and I quote - “Participating States, individually and collectively, bear the primary responsibility and are accountable to their citizens for the implementation of their commitments on equality of rights and equal opportunities for women and men. They have committed themselves to making equality between women and men an integral part of policies both at State level and within the Organization. They will ensure the full use of the appropriate OSCE fora for reviewing the implementation of OSCE commitments on equality between women and men.”
- ✚ Participating States are also called upon to implement their commitments in six priority areas, which are the following:
 - Ensuring non-discriminatory legal and policy frameworks
 - Preventing violence against women

- Ensuring equal opportunity for participation of women in political and public life
- Promote the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)
- Promoting equal opportunity for women in the economic sphere
- Building national mechanisms for the advancement of women.

✚ The current GAP was adopted in 2004 and still provides us with guidance on gender issues in the OSCE. It is a comprehensive and wide document, however with no indicators or benchmarks. This is on one hand a weakness as it does not clearly identify stakeholders and a clear goal, but on the other hand it gives us flexibility to adapt to the changing circumstances in the OSCE region.

✚ And this is what we have to do. In the eight years since the adoption of the Action Plan a lot has been done in the international arena to step up the implementation of gender-related commitments. Among others, there has been the creation of UN Women which sent a powerful signal to all UN member States to intensify efforts in this area. Against this backdrop and following the recommendation of last year's Annual Evaluation Report that suggested to review and update the Gender Action Plan, the OSCE Gender Section started exploring ways how to modernize the commitments of the GAP and started reviewing how far the OSCE has come in its implementation and what challenges remain for a full implementation of the GAP.

✚ As a first step we initiated, together with the OSCE Office of Internal Oversight, at the beginning of this year a management review of the second pillar of the GAP – that is the pillar that is concerned with the gender mainstreaming in programmes, projects and policies of the OSCE. The review showed that although there has been an improvement within the OSCE towards greater gender mainstreaming, there is still room for advancement. For instance, the management review showed among other things that there is still a lack of understanding of how to gender mainstream throughout the stages of the project cycle. Furthermore, the review showed that it seems harder for staff to find entry points for gender mainstreaming in politico-military affairs than in human dimension projects – besides from ensuring that there are female participants at training sessions, seminars and so on.

✚ To improve results in this area and to assist program and project staff, in particular in the field missions, to gender mainstream throughout the cycle of projects, programmes and policies, the Gender Section has developed a capacity building programme for OSCE staff that helps them to better understand gender mainstreaming in their respective context.

✚ As the staff turnover in OSCE is quite high (the average stay of staff in the field being 18 months) we concluded that there needs to be continuous training programs on practical implementation of gender mainstreaming throughout the organization to ensure that the GAP is implemented at an organizational level.

- ✚ In further efforts to improve and modernize the implementation of the commitments of the GAP, the Gender Section has focused on some key issues. As mentioned already we have seen that the first dimension is lagging behind in respect of gender mainstreaming efforts. Consequently, this year we have chosen to prioritize UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. We have arranged for awareness-raising in formal and informal bodies of the OSCE such as the Forum for Security Co-operation, the Security Committee and Human Dimension Committee.
- ✚ In line with Ministerial Council Decision 3/11 on enhancing the OSCE work in the conflict cycle, the Gender Section has developed recommendations for how to include women in early warning, both in the stages of information gathering, collation and its analysis.
- ✚ Furthermore, gender should be an integrate part of the Mediation Capacity that is in the process of being set up in line with MC/DEC/3/11.
- ✚ Therefore we are arranging an expert roundtable on how to include women in mediation and peace negotiations in the OSCE region on the 22 October in Vienna. For early spring next year we are planning to hold – in co-operation with UN Women – a high-level conference on 1325 in Central Asia to raise awareness for the resolution in this region and look into best practices for its implementation.
- ✚ But before that we hope to get a strong expression of political will by the participating States to comply with their obligations and further improve the implementation of 1325. With the support of the Gender Section, some OSCE delegations have started looking into the possibility of developing an OSCE-wide Action Plan for the implementation of 1325. This would result in the OSCE having a more coordinated effort in its activities related to the resolution. It would also enhance the process of information sharing on challenges and best practices of the development of National Action Plans on 1325 and their implementation – and maybe even pool resources for the development of NAPs.
- ✚ As a result of the considerations around 1325 we believe that structures for reviewing UNSCR 1325 implementation should be set up in order to enhance coordination and information sharing across the OSCE region. This could be done in the shape of a regular review conference on the resolution's implementation.
- ✚ Let me at this point address only one more serious challenge we are facing when it comes to the implementation of the GAP. Although the OSCE annually evaluates the Gender Action Plan we have so far been confined to look at how our organization is implementing the respective commitments. To date we were

not able to monitor and evaluate the performance of the participating States when it comes to gender-related commitments. This is because we lack coherent data on gender issues across the OSCE region. In order to have annual updates of all the pillars of the GAP – including the progress made in the participating States – the Gender Section is considering creating questionnaires to be sent out to participating States to collect information about the progress of the commitments taken in the GAP and subsequent Ministerial Council Decision. This would also to collect and share best practices and assist the OSCE in creating policies that are relevant and applicable in the participating States.

- ✚ For such an endeavour it would be of great help to have structures created in participating States – such as focal points – to enable data collection and exchange.
- ✚ In concluding let me emphasize that in all its activities the Gender Section consults and coordinates with the relevant OSCE structures, in particular with ODIHR, June Zeitlin as the Special Representative on Gender Issues and the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre.